

respondents who indicated **they would not** pay a trail use fee further indicated they felt taxes should pay for trail maintenance and operations.

It should be noted that those trail users returning the follow-up survey indicated they had not paid any fees, including parking fees, for trail use on the day they were intercepted.

Trail User Findings

The data collected in the Indiana Trails Study user intercept and follow-up surveys provided a valuable and detailed description of trail user demographics, preferences and use patterns. Analysis of the trail user survey data found:

- Trail users generally live close by, usually within 2 miles of, the trail and enter and exit the trail at the same location
- Trail users include all ethnic, age, education levels and income levels
- Walking and bicycling are the predominant methods of travel along the trails
- Users primarily utilize the trails for health/fitness (65%), and recreation (28 %)
- A small percentage of users commuted along the trails in urban locations (4%)
- On average, trail users are on the trail for between 100 and 200 minutes total over 3 to 4 days during a week
- Trail users feel strongly that their trail is safe
- Trail users report a more favorable view of the city due to trail development
- Trail users are very satisfied with the trail and report that it is very important to them

- The payment of trail use fees was not totally rejected by trail users with 41% of users across all 6 trail sites reporting they would pay an annual use fee of between \$5-20
- On average, 79% of all trail users indicated they participated in their preferred activity more because of the trail.

Figure 5: Indiana's Historic Trails: The Country Road



Trail Neighbors

The Indiana Trails Study was designed to obtain attitudes and opinions from those property owners who lived adjacent to the trail, known as trail neighbors. It was determined early that the best method to survey the trail neighbors was a sample of all adjacent property owners as provided by the trail agency. Each agency was asked to provide a listing of trail neighbors from their city records so that all neighbors, as defined by the local trail agency, would receive the mail survey. Response rates from the trail cities ranged from 38% to 51% after follow-up mailings; with an average response rate

Summary Report

of 43.7% for all trail cities. The data received from the Trail Neighbor Survey is summarized in the Trail Data Summary Tables found in Appendix A, and highlighted in the following charts and descriptions.

Property Description

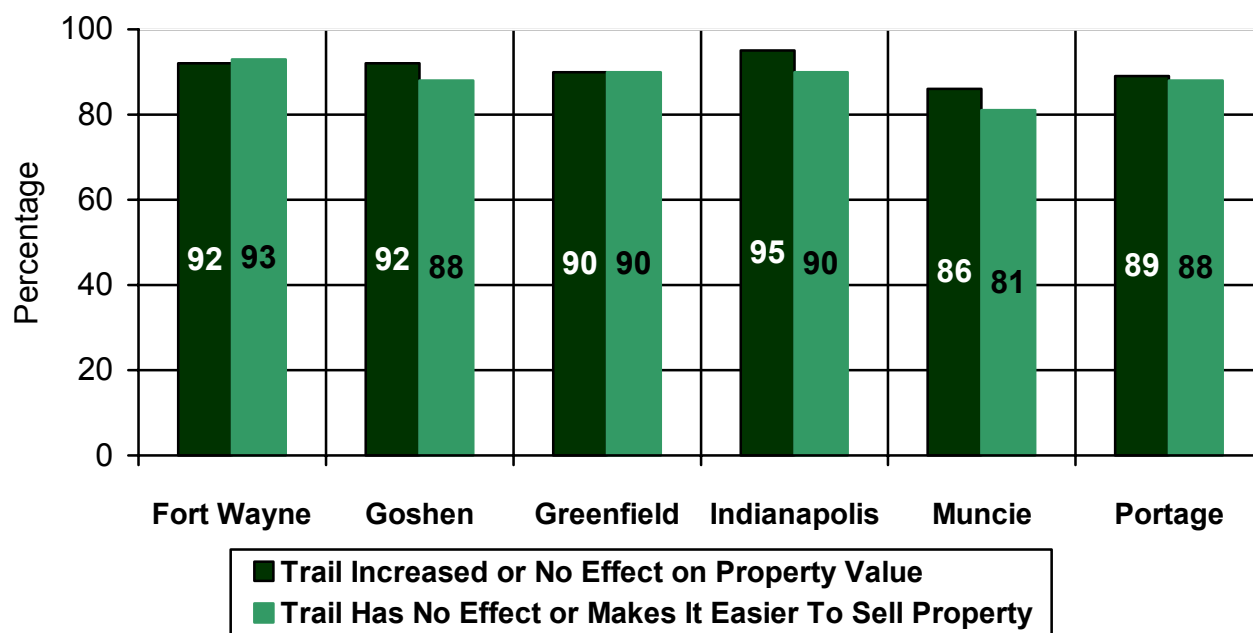
Trail neighbor property varied from city to city and with the exception of one city, was generally principle residential property with the back of the house facing the trail. It is important to note that trail neighbors responding to the survey along the Pennsy Rail Trail in Greenfield all held tracts of commercial property that was purchased before the trail was developed. All properties in the trail neighbor survey were close or adjacent to the trail and varied in size. It is interesting to observe which side of the house faces the trail because most trails are developed along abandoned rail lines, alleys, canals and/or other abandoned areas placing trail users in the back (usually the most private area) of a residential unit. This was

largely found to be true in the case of trails in Goshen, Indianapolis, Muncie and Portage.

Trail Effect on Property

Trail neighbors reported a number of effects on their property based on the survey questions presented to them. A primary interest for most trail neighbors and agencies developing trails is the effect of trail development on property value and quality of life for the neighbors. Chart 19 exhibits trail neighbor perception of the effects of trail development on their property. The chart clearly shows that a very large percentage of trail neighbors viewed trail development as having either no effect or a positive effect on their property's value and on the salability of their property. Specifically 86% to 95% of trail neighbors indicated they felt the trail had either no effect or a positive effect on their property value. Coupled with trail neighbor responses of between 81% and 93% indicating the trail had no negative effect or made it easier to sell their property, it is clear

Chart 19: Percentage of Trail Neighbors Viewing Trail As Having No or A Positive Effect on Adjacent Property



the majority of trail neighbors do not anticipate negative effects on the value and ease of selling their property.

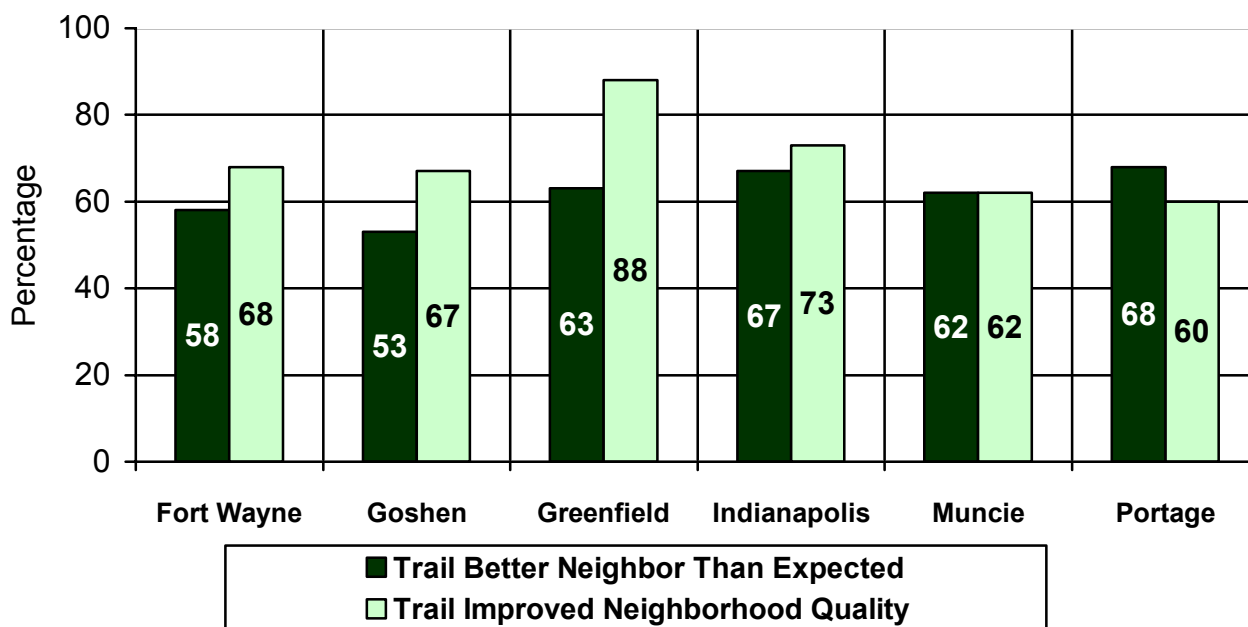
Living Near The Trail

Chart 20 provides a glimpse of trail neighbor opinion about the trail as an improvement to the neighborhood. This survey item was asked of trail neighbors who had purchased

60% to 88% with an average of 69% of all trail neighbors across all 6-trail sites. Trail neighbors also indicated they were satisfied with the trail as a neighbor. These two opinions of trail neighbors, who owned their property before the trail was developed, indicates that living near a trail would have a positive or neutral impact on quality of life in the neighborhood.

Living near or adjacent to a trail can make it

Chart 20: Percentage of Trail Neighbors Viewing Trail As Improving Neighborhood or As Better Neighbor



their property before the trail was developed and allowed researchers to gauge changes to the quality of life for those residents living adjacent to the trail. As shown in Chart 20, responding trail neighbors indicated that on an average 61% of trail neighbors in all 6 cities felt the trail was a better neighbor than expected. Trail neighbors reporting this perception ranged from 53% to 63%.

Trail neighbors also indicated their belief that the trail improved the quality of the neighborhood as shown in Chart 20. The percentage of neighbors who felt the trail improved the neighborhood ranged from

easy to use the trail. Trail neighbors were asked to document the amount of use and time of year during which they or members of their household may have used the trail. Charts 21 and 22 provide a description of trail neighbor use patterns by season, and frequency per week. Overall, trail neighbor use ranged from a low of 1.43 to a high of 3.1 days per week. Seasonal trail use reflects the highest activity level in summer, lowest trail use in the winter, and moderately high use levels in spring and fall.

Chart 21: Average Trail Neighbor Use of Trail By Season

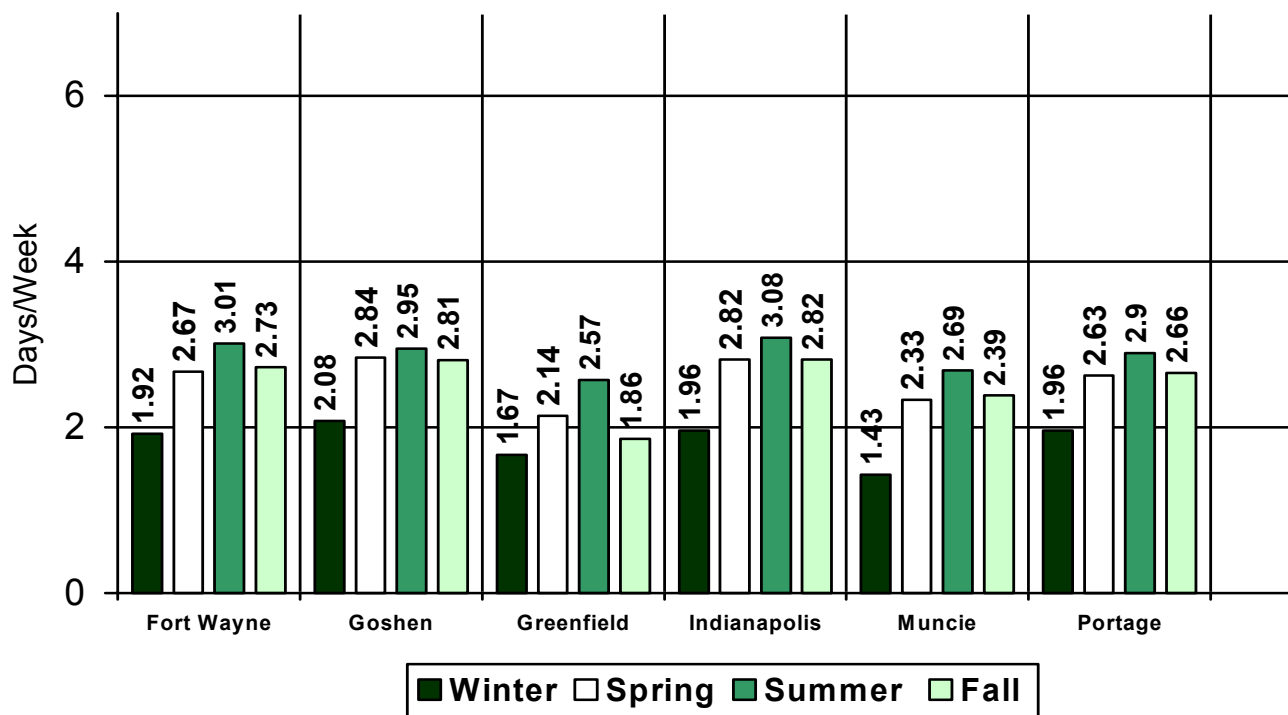


Chart 22: Percentage of Trail Neighbors Using Trail in Past 12 Months

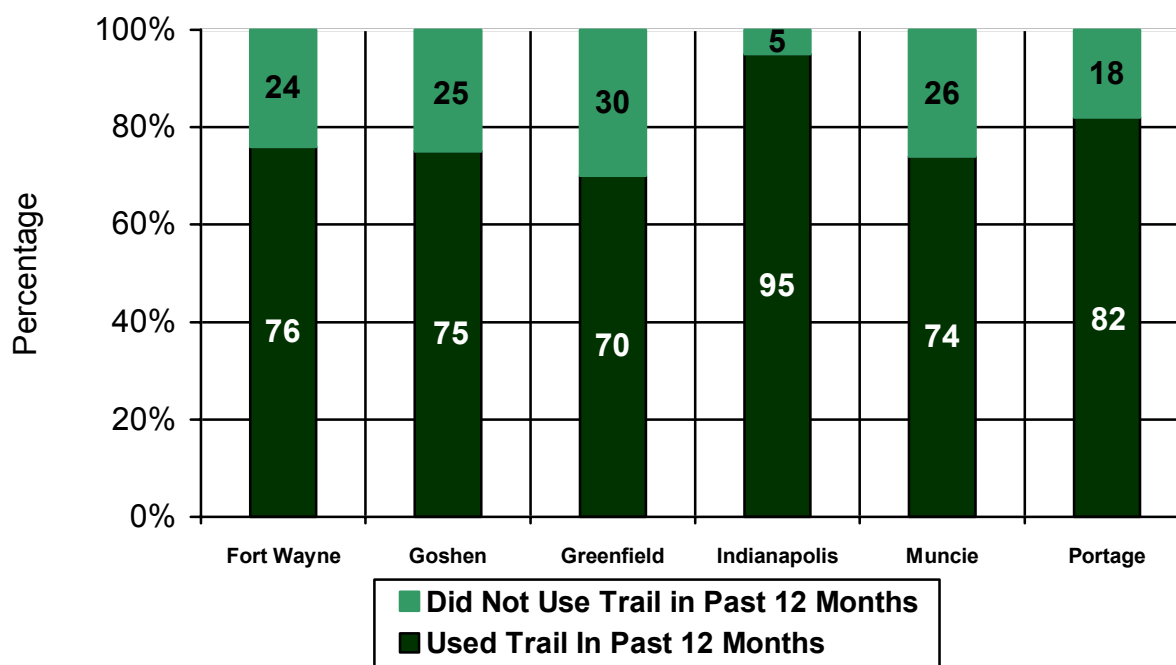


Chart 22 provides detail on the percentage of trail neighbors who reported they used the trail in the past 12 months. Between 70 and 95% of trail neighbors reported they used the trail. This information reinforces the emphasis that trail neighbors find trails to be relatively good neighbors and very convenient for members of their households.

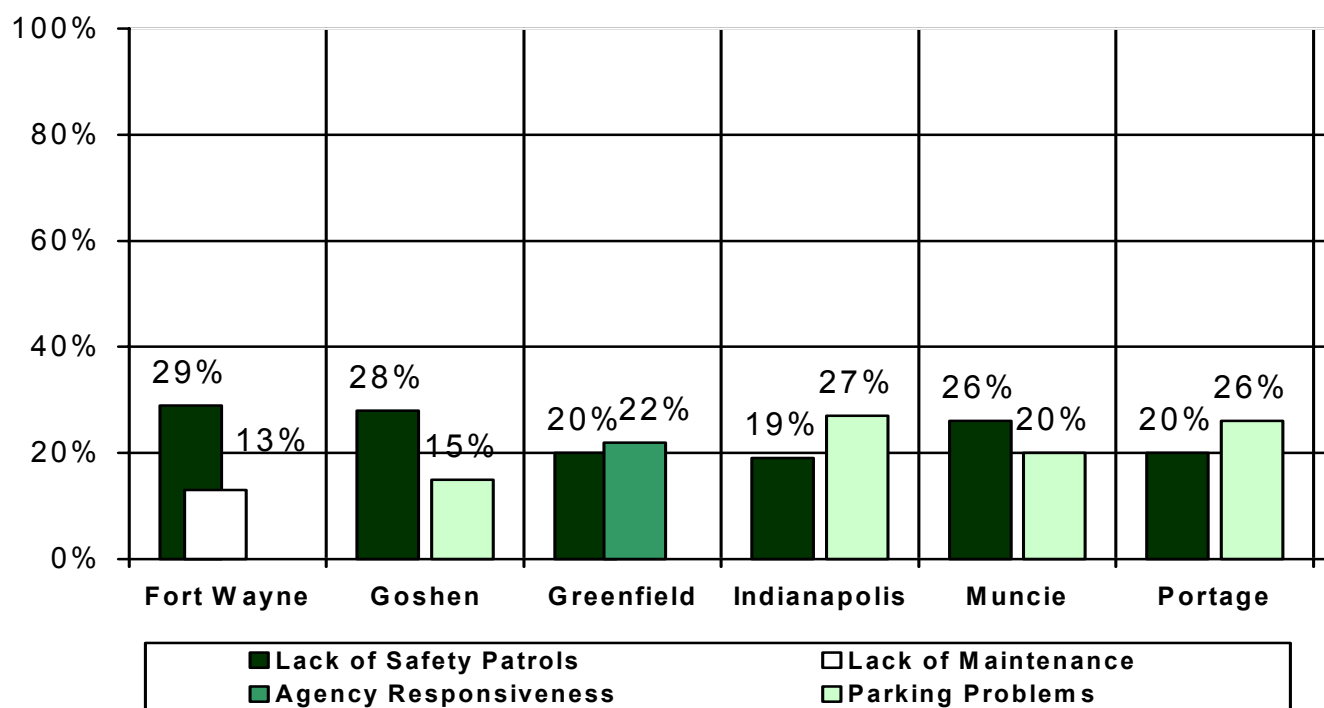
Trail Neighbor Issues, Dissatisfaction and Opinions

The controversy that sometimes occurs when trails are proposed is often the direct result of trail neighbor fears and anticipated dissatisfaction with the trail. The Indiana Trails Study solicited trail neighbor attitudes and opinions with dissatisfaction factors and other issues related to living adjacent to one of the 6 trails studied. An analysis of factors leading to dissatisfaction by trail neighbors is

displayed in Chart 23. The highest dissatisfaction factor reported by trail neighbors in terms of percentage of responses (20% to 29% of responding neighbors) and frequency across all 6-trail cities is lack of safety patrols on the trails. The second most frequently reported dissatisfaction issue reported by trail neighbors was parking problems. This dissatisfaction was reported in 4 of the 6 trail cities (Goshen, Indianapolis, Muncie and Portage) in percentages ranging from 15% to 25% of trail neighbors. Additional dissatisfaction factors were reported that included a lack of maintenance on the trail, and agency responsiveness to problems.

Chart 24 displays trail neighbor response to a survey question asking them to rate the public benefits of trails. With the exception of trail neighbors adjacent to the Pennsy Rail

Chart 23: Factors Leading To Dissatisfaction of Trail Neighbors



Summary Report

Chart 24: Trail Neighbor Ratings For Extremely Important Public Benefits of Trail

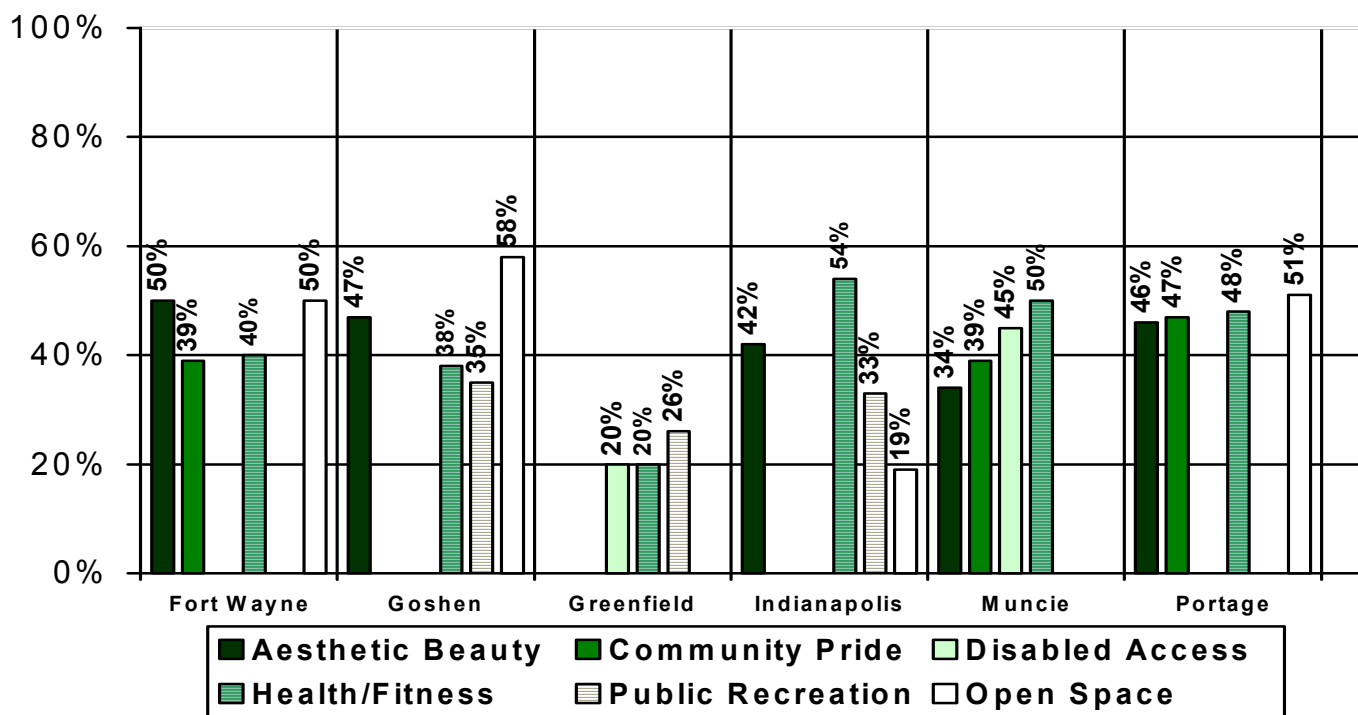
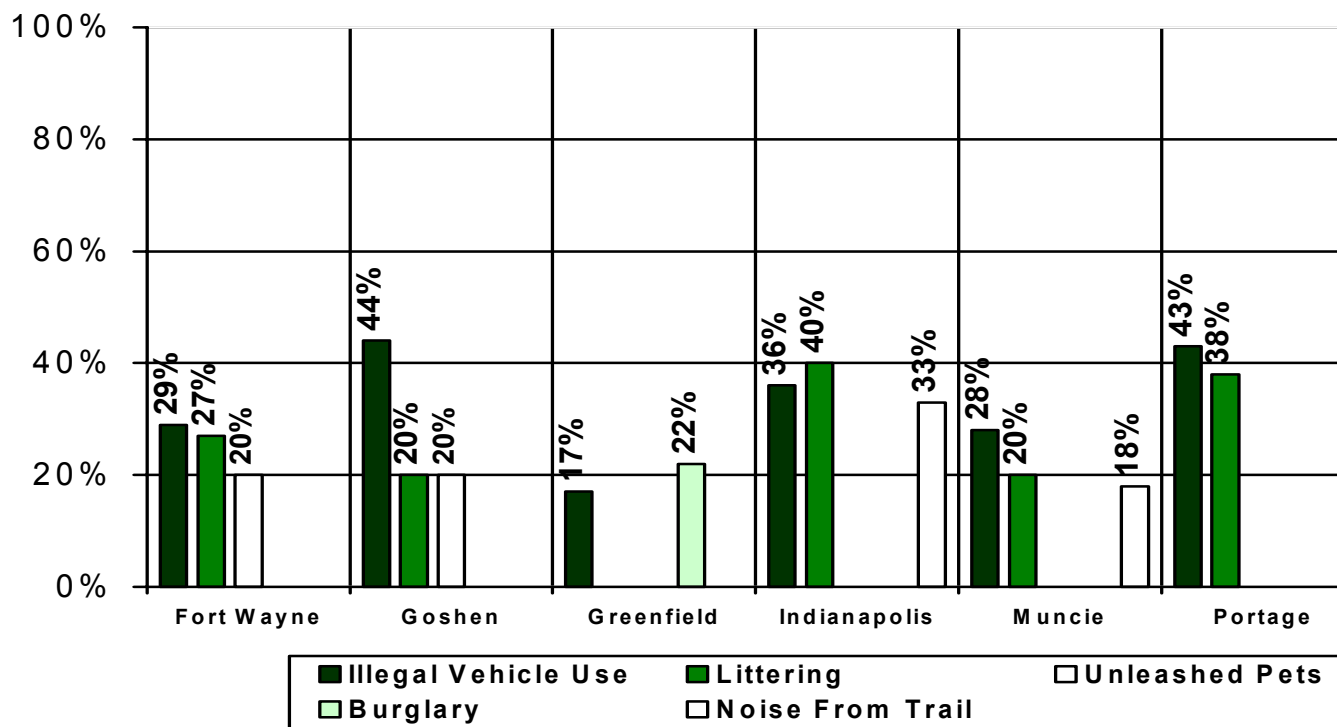


Chart 25: Most Frequent Problems Reported By Trail Neighbors



Trail in Greenfield (all commercial property uses), trail neighbors consistently ranked the public benefits of providing open space, providing public recreation, health and fitness opportunity, community pride, aesthetic beauty, and disabled access as extremely important in percentage responses ranging from 33% to 58%. The ratings are not consistent among public benefits, rank order or percentage of neighbors rating the benefit as extremely important, but are notable for the large percentage of trail neighbors having extremely supportive views on the general public benefits of trails.

Of course, trail neighbors do experience incidents or activities that lead to negative perceptions. These problems are thought to occur frequently on adjacent properties, creating issues of concern for trail neighbors. While it is generally known that trail neighbors feel a relative lack of privacy, specific problems are often not quantified. Indiana Trails Study trail neighbors were asked to indicate the most common problems they experienced.

Chart 25 provides a snapshot of the most common problems and the percentage of trail neighbors who reported this as a frequent problem. The most commonly reported problem, illegal vehicle use, relates to use of motorized vehicles on trail right of way and is most frequent in 5 of the 6 trail sites surveyed. The next most commonly reported problem, unleashed pets roaming along trails, was also common to 5 of the 6 trail sites surveyed. Other frequently reported problems included litter from trail users, and excessive noise, which were reported in 2 of the 6 trail cities. Only Greenfield's Pennsy Rail Trail neighbors (commercial property) reported burglary as a frequent problem.

Trail Neighbor Findings

The survey of trail neighbors in the Indiana Trails Study provides valuable and important data regarding trail neighbor opinion, attitude and issues for future trail development and management. The survey indicates that:

Figure 6: Trail in Southern Indiana



- A majority of trail neighbors reported either no effect or a positive effect on property value and ease of selling property located adjacent to the trail
- The trail was felt to be a better neighbor than expected and to improve the quality of the neighborhood by a large majority of trail neighbors
- Trail neighbors are heavy users of the trail itself, reporting, on average, 2-3 days of trail use per week
- Over 70%, and as much as 95% of all trail neighbors reported using the trail during the prior 12 months

Summary Report

- Trail neighbors are most dissatisfied with a lack of safety patrols and parking problems in the vicinity of their property
- Those trail neighbors responding to the survey indicated illegal vehicle use and unleashed pets roaming along the trail are the most common problems

Consistent findings of emerging trends from all 6-trail cities included:

- The biggest advantages to trail development adjacent to personal property was easy, close to home access to recreational facilities for families with children
- Realtors did not see any major increases in property value, or ease in property sale as a result of trail development
- The biggest disadvantages to trail development adjacent to personal property were a decrease in privacy and an increase in foot traffic near the homeowner yards

Realtor Conversations

The Indiana Trails Study originally designed a focus group research protocol with local realtors in each city as a means of measuring trail impacts on real estate. After poor attendance at focus groups, and to reduce time and data collection costs, a change was made in research methodology to conduct individual telephone interviews of realtors in each city. The individual telephone interviews were conducted between November and December 2000 with at least 10 realtors in each community. The results of this qualitative research were recorded for analysis of emerging trends.

Figure 7: Trail Crossing at Clear Creek, Bloomington, IN

